

MEMORIAL

OF

SUNDRY BANKS OF NEW YORK,

Praying that certain Foreign Coins be made a legal tender, that the value of Gold Coins be regulated, and that the means of coining at the Mint be increased.

MAY 26, 1834.

Referred to the Committee on Finance, and ordered to be printed.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

The memorial of the undersigned,

RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTS:

That the dollar of Spain, and the gold and silver coins of the United States, constitute, at present, the only legal currency of the country; and that, from the commercial value of the Spanish dollar, and the intrinsic value of the gold coins of the United States, they have become mere articles of merchandise, and are no longer to be considered as forming any portion of the metallic currency. Thus it appears that the legal currency of the country is practically confined to the silver coins of the United States, of which there is not a sufficient quantity to answer the ordinary purposes of business, much less to meet the extraordinary demands which circumstances occasionally produce. Nor is it practicable to obtain such coins; for recent experience has shown that the powers or operations of the Mint are altogether inadequate, under its present regulations, to furnish the necessary supply, from two to four months being required for the coinage of any considerable amount, and even small sums are not to be obtained without difficulty or delay. Hence the moneyed institutions of the country, while compelled, by necessity, to adopt the use of foreign coins, are exposed to the evils and embarrassments arising from the fact that such coins are not recognized by the laws of the land.

Your memorialists, therefore, earnestly, but respectfully, pray, that the dollar of Mexico, Colombia, Chili, and Peru, which are equal in weight and fineness to the Spanish dollar, be likewise made a legal tender, and to pass by tale; and, also, that the five franc pieces of France be adopted at a fixed value, and rendered in like manner a legal coin.

The gold coins of the United States, if rated at their intrinsic value, might be retained in the country, and would consequently become a convenient portion of the metallic currency. And your memorialists respectfully recommend the subject to the attention of Congress.

Your memorialists would also beg leave to suggest the propriety of increasing the powers of adding to the capabilities of the Mint, so as to enable it, on the deposit of bullion, to furnish the coins that may be required, without that injurious uncertainty and delay which are at present experienced, and which so greatly detract from the utility of the establishment. But in the present state of the metallic currency, your memorialists deem the legalization of the foreign silver coins above-mentioned to be of the utmost importance, and they most earnestly request that a law to that effect may be passed without delay.

NEW YORK, *May 20, 1834.*

Signed as follows :

Bank of New York, by Cornelius Hoyer, president.
Tradesmen's Bank, by Preserved Fish, president.
Bank of America, by George Newbold, president.
Merchants' Bank, by John J. Palmer, president.
Mechanics' Bank, by John Fleming, president.
Phenix Bank, by J. Delafield, cashier.
City Bank, by G. A. Worth, cashier.
National Bank, by Albert Gallatin, president.
Union Bank, by Wm. Howard, president.
Chemical Bank, by John Mason, president.
Fulton Bank, by John Adams, president.
Leather Manufacturers' Bank, by F. W. Edmonds, cashier.
Merchants' Exchange Bank, by Peter Stagg, president.
Mechanics and Traders' Bank, by Peres Jones, president.
Butchers and Drovers' Bank, by B. M. Brown, president.
North River Bank, by Leonard Kip, president.
Greenwich Bank, by Samuel Whittemore, president.
Seventh Ward Bank, by Walter Bowne, president.

NEW YORK, *May 22, 1834.*

GENTLEMEN: We hand you, enclosed, a memorial to Congress from the banks in this city in relation to the metallic currency of the United States, which memorial we respectfully request you to present to the Senate, and we beg leave earnestly to commend it to your especial care and attention. Believing that you will fully appreciate the importance of the measures asked for, we shall rely with confidence upon your influence in sustaining them. Knowing as we do the inconvenience and embarrassments which are occasioned by the present state of the metallic currency, and the inefficiency of the Mint under its present regulations, in furnishing a supply, we feel anxiously, and cannot too strongly represent to you, the importance of the subject, and the necessity for the adoption of early and proper measures for relief.

It is in all respects desirable that Congress should, without delay, pass the necessary laws to raise the value of the gold coin of the United States, and to establish certain foreign silver coins as legal currency, but we consider the latter, and a suitable regulation of the Mint, of the highest importance, and, in the present situation of things, as essential to the commercial inter-

ests of the country, and absolutely necessary for the convenience, and perhaps the safety, of the banking institutions.

We take the liberty to enclose herein drafts of two bills, one concerning the gold coins of the United States, and the other to make certain foreign silver coins a legal tender. These bills are plain in form, and are confined to the simple objects we all want; and, whatever may be their merits in reference to a perfection of the currency, we believe them to be sound and correct in principle, calculated to avoid objections as to detail, and such as will be likely to obtain a vote of both Houses of Congress in their favor. We hope, therefore, as the occasion is urgent, and as the bills are limited to a period of only three years, that they may be substituted for those now before Congress, and become laws accordingly; and that, in the intermediate time, such other, and, if you please, more perfect laws may be passed, as the deliberate consideration and wisdom of Congress may prescribe. Referring you to the remarks which you will find attached to the bills enclosed;

We are, gentlemen, in behalf of the memorialists,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

ALBERT GALLATIN.

GEO. NEWBOLD.

JOHN J. PALMER.

G. A. WORTH.

To the honorable SILAS WRIGHT, and
N. P. TALLMAGE,
Washington.

P. S. The enclosed is a copy of the memorial. The original is sent to the delegation from this city for presentation to the House of Representatives.

A BILL

Concerning the Gold Coins of the United States.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, from and after the day of next, the gold coins struck and coined at the Mint of the United States shall be of the following denominations, values, and descriptions, viz.

Eagles.—Each to be of the value of ten dollars current money of the United States, and to contain two hundred and thirty-seven grains and six-tenths of a grain of pure gold, or two hundred and fifty-nine grains and two-tenths of a grain of standard gold.

Half Eagles.—Each to be of the value of five dollars, and to contain one hundred and eighteen grains and eight tenths of a grain of pure gold, or one hundred and twenty-nine grains and six-tenths of a grain of standard gold.

Quarter Eagles.—Each to be of the value of two dollars and a half, and to contain fifty-nine grains and four-tenths of a grain of pure gold, or sixty-four grains and eight-tenths of a grain of standard gold.

Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That so much of the several acts establishing the Mint, and regulating the coins of the United States, as are inconsistent with the provisions of this act, be, and the same are hereby, repealed.

A BILL

Regulating the value of certain Foreign Silver Coins within the United States.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, from and after the passage of this act, and for three years thereafter, and no longer, the following silver coins shall pass current as money within the United States, and be a legal tender for the payment of all debts and demands at the rates following, that is to say: the dollars of Mexico, Peru, Chili, Central America, and Brazil, weighing not less than four hundred and fifteen grains each dollar, at one hundred cents each; and the five-franc pieces of France, each weighing not less than three hundred and eighty-six grains, at ninety-three cents and three mills each.

Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Treasury to cause assays of the aforesaid silver coins, made current by this act, to be had at the Mint of the United States at least once in every year, and to make report of the result thereof to Congress.

Memorandum.

The importance of the object in view renders it necessary to present each in the most unexceptionable shape, and separated from every other subject which might embarrass, and perhaps frustrate the design.

First. Foreign silver coins. The mode proposed by the enclosed bill is the same which is now in force with respect to Spanish dollars, and had heretofore been adopted for five-franc pieces. It was not, and cannot in practice, be attended with the slightest inconvenience. As to the weight, it is, for the five-franc pieces, the legal weight, and that heretofore adopted for the Mexican and South American dollars, that now required by law for the Spanish. In reality Mexican dollars weighing $414\frac{1}{2}$ grains are, on account of the difference in fineness, equal in value to our dollars weighing 416 grains.

Second. American gold coins. This is all we want, and it is much wanted. The quantity of pure gold in the eagle is that proposed by the committee of Congress, but the French standard, or $\frac{9}{10}$ fine, is adopted in the bill of the committee, and our old standard. (the same with the British and Portuguese,) or $\frac{11}{12}$ pure, is preserved in the enclosed bill. This is immaterial in itself, but to preserve what exists, as far as practicable, may prevent opposition and debate. The half and quarter eagles are, by the enclosed bill, of the same proportionate value, according to weight, as the eagle. The bill, as reported to Congress, proposes a deteriorated subsidiary gold currency. This is a project which, if defensible, is liable to so many objections, that to blend that subject with the mere raising of the legal value of gold to its market price would certainly defeat the bill.